

Francoist Spain and the 1937 Moroccan Pilgrimage: Visits to Córdoba, Seville, and the Use of Islamic Heritage

This dossier compiles key information, sources, and historical context regarding the 1937 Moroccan pilgrimage delegation led by Ahmad al-Rahuni, invited by Franco's regime, and their visits to major Islamic heritage sites such as the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba and the Alcázar of Seville. These events highlight Francoist Spain's efforts to present itself as a friend of Islam and a protector of al-Andalus heritage, as part of its wartime propaganda and early foreign policy.

Key Events & Highlights

- **1937 Hajj Delegation:** Moroccan scholar Ahmad al-Rahuni was invited by Franco and Spanish officials to visit Spain before and after his Hajj pilgrimage. The trip included ceremonial receptions and meetings with high-ranking Nationalist authorities.
- **Prayer in the Mezquita of Córdoba:** Al-Rahuni's memoirs describe entering the Great Mosque of Córdoba with Spanish escorts and performing the midday and afternoon prayers in the prayer niche, symbolically reclaiming the space for Muslim devotion.
- **Visits to Seville:** The delegation toured the Alcázar and La Giralda (the former Almohad minaret), connecting Spain's Islamic past with Moroccan heritage.
- **Propaganda Value:** Spanish Nationalist press (ABC, Arriba) reported extensively on these events, framing Franco as a friend of the Muslim world and a protector of Islamic monuments.
- **Long-Term Impact:** These symbolic acts laid the groundwork for Francoist Spain's Arab policy during the 1940s–1970s, including further cultural diplomacy and pro-Arab positions in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Selected Sources & Bibliography

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- ABC (Seville edition), April 1937, press coverage of the Moroccan pilgrims and their visits.
- ResearchGate article: "Arquitectura, memoria y futuro: La mezquita-catedral de Córdoba."